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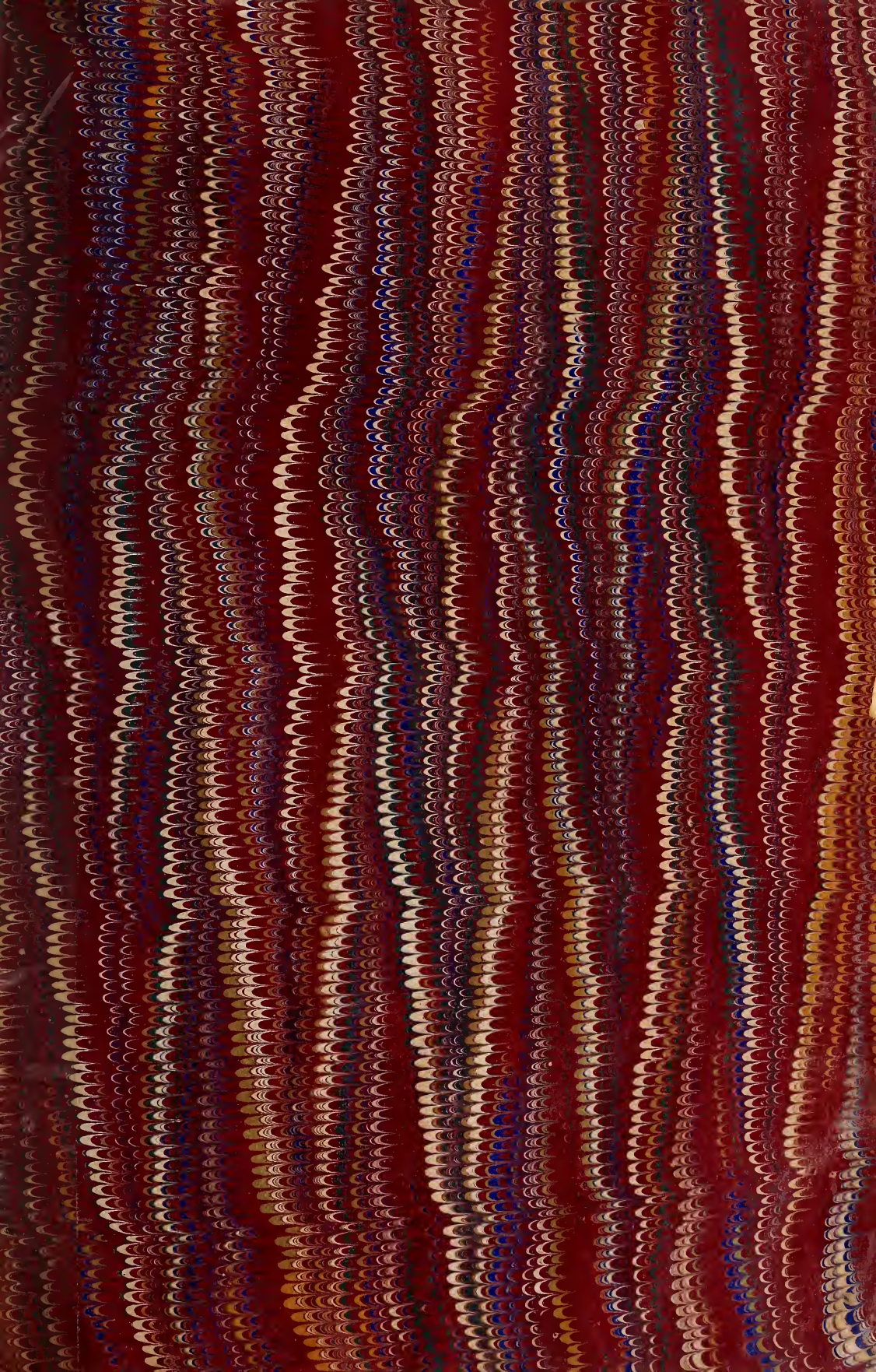


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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



A
NARRATIVE
OF THE
WONDERFUL ESCAPE
AND
DREADFUL SUFFERINGS
OF

COLONEL JAMES PAUL,

AFTER THE DEFEAT OF COLONEL CRAWFORD, WHEN THAT
UNFORTUNATE COMMANDER, AND MANY OF HIS MEN,
WERE INHUMANLY BURNT AT THE STAKE,
AND OTHERS WERE SLAUGHTERED BY
OTHER MODES OF TORTURE, KNOWN
ONLY TO SAVAGES.

4 B 2 BY ROBERT H. SHERRARD.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE object of the publisher of this narrative is two-fold : to preserve from oblivion the deeds of our ancestors, that the rising generation may be instructed and improved by their perseverance and triumphs over difficulties that surrounded them—and that the future historian may be furnished with material with which to do ample justice to our past history. The facts incidentally stated, that Colonel Paul was the uncle of the late Judge George Paul Torrence, the father of the present Mayor of the city of Cincinnati, and that he built on Brush Creek, in Adams county, the pioneer furnace of Southern Ohio, and that Colonel Samuel Paul was born in 1760; his father, George Paul, moved on the farm in 1768, and died in 1778; and that Colonel James Paul died July 9th, 1841, aged eighty-one years, and that he was twenty-five years old at the time of Crawford's defeat, and was unmarried, are facts that might be thought of but little importance to some, but the future historian may regard them as facts of inestimable value.

NARRATIVE
OF THE
WONDERFUL ESCAPE, ETC.,
OF COLONEL JAMES PAUL.

MY present intention in furnishing you for publication this copy of the narrative of Colonel James Paul's almost miraculous escape from the Sandusky Indians at the time of Colonel Crawford's defeat, is two-fold—to give the public and the many friends of Colonel Paul a true statement of that hair-breath escape, and in the second place to correct an error into which some writers have fallen, as to the motive of Colonel Crawford and his noble band of volunteers in going to Upper Sandusky, which object was in reality to whip the Wyandottes and bands of hostile Indians, and to burn their town; and not, as erroneously reported, to complete the slaughter of the remainder of the peaceable Christian Moravian Indians.

In the spring of 1782 a scheme was formed and put on foot, the object of which was to check the Sandusky Indians, principally that of the Wyandotte tribe, which

tribe was at that time the most bold, daring, and ferocious of any of the other hostile tribes, whose depredations on the frontier settlers had grown hard to be borne.

A further object of the scheme was the destruction of the Indian town at Upper Sandusky, and thus to check and put a stop, if possible, to the scalping, murdering, and plundering which was continually committed by the hostile Indians on the defenseless settlers on the frontier of West Virginia and West Pennsylvania.

It is not true that the object of Colonel Crawford and his volunteer companies was to go to Upper Sandusky and slaughter and kill off the balance or remainder of the peaceable Moravian Indians, as stated by Weems and one other author, who have misstated the object of these brave, noble-hearted volunteers, who, under Colonel Crawford, risked their lives in an enemy's country. Surely it could not be the object of these men to go so far into an enemy's country for the sole purpose of completing the slaughter of a few remaining Moravian Indians, while they could turn their hands against the Wyandotte tribe and their hostile allies, and thereby perform a better service and do a nobler action. I will here let Colonel James Paul give his narrative of his hair-breadth escape from the Indians at the time of Crawford's defeat :

In the month of January, 1826, I called upon Colonel James Paul, and received a satisfactory statement of his narrow escape from the camp-ground of Upper Sandusky on his retreat homeward. In his report to

me of Crawford's Campaign he contradicted the statement of Weems, particularly in that that it was not the scheme, or any part of it, for Colonel Crawford and his volunteers to go out and kill off the few remaining Christian Moravian Indians. Colonel Paul further stated to me that Weems made another misstatement where, in speaking of Colonel Crawford's volunteers, he says they were all volunteers from the immediate neighborhood of Ohio, except one company from Ten Mile, in Washington county, Pennsylvania; when the fact was, said Colonel Paul, they were all volunteers from Fayette county, Pennsylvania, from the east side of the Monongahela River, east of Brownsville, except one company from Ten Mile, in Washington county, Pennsylvania, and the command of the volunteers was given to Colonel Crawford, who marched the men from Benson, now Uniontown, on the 20th of May, 1782, on to Brownsville, then called Redstone Old Fort, where more volunteers joined us, and on the 22d of May we arrived at Cat Fish, now Washington, Pennsylvania, where more volunteers, a company from Ten Mile, joined us.

On the 24th we left Washington, Pennsylvania, and on the 25th arrived at the Ohio River, but did not cross until the 26th of May, 1782. Our volunteers then and there numbered four hundred and eighty-two men. We crossed the Ohio River at the old Indian Mingo town, and from there we took up over the hill and traveled on an old Indian trail near where the villages of Jefferson and Salem (now Anapolis) now stand, on the dividing ridge. We traveled on the ridge until

the Indian trail we traveled on intersected another trail leading out from the Ohio River opposite where Wellsburg now stands. The Indian trail led us on westward to the Moravian towns on the west side of the Muskingum river. The names of these Moravian towns in these days were Shonnenberg, Sharon, Goshen, and Naden Hutten. At all these Moravian towns silence and desolation reigned; all was desolation, owing to the massacre of these peaceable Christian Indians by Colonel Williamson's desperate set of insubordinate, unpolished, half-civilized frontier settlers, in the month of March, 1782, previous to our design of marching out to destroy Wyandotte towns at Upper Sandusky.

These men, after they had murdered all the Christian Moravian Indians, great and small, male and female, that they could lay their hands on (and it is said none escaped except an Indian boy ten or twelve years old, by creeping out through a window while those fiends were engaged in dispatching his relatives, and escaping to the Wyandotte tribe at Upper Sandusky, conveying the intelligence of the massacre to the hostile Indians), set fire to the corn-cribs and burnt them up, together with all their contents. For it was considered necessary that the corn should be burnt or destroyed to prevent its falling into the hands of the Wyandottes, or other hostile bands of marauding Indians.

After the news of the massacre of these peaceable Christian Indians had spread abroad, it was strongly denounced by the public generally, as an uncalled for atrocity, and Colonel Williamson was severely censured for suffering such a heinous offense to be committed

before his eyes, and that too by men under his command. It is true, these men were under the command of Colonel Williamson, but not under his control. They were a set of desperate, wicked, unprincipled men—frontier settlers; such men as may always be found upon the outskirts of civilization—men that bore a deadly hatred to all Indians of every tribe, and would neither be advised nor controlled by their commander but took the work into their own hands, and as any insubordinate set of men would do under such circumstances, regardless of consequences.

These men afterward strove to make the public believe, as a palliation of their wicked deed, that they had found clothing among these pet Indians that had been stripped off of their wives and daughters after they had been tomahawked and scalped by the Indians, and that the sight of these well-known articles of family clothing so exasperated and stirred up such a spirit of revenge in the bosoms of those men that Colonel Williamson had no control over them; they took the matter into their own hands, and these facts concerning the want of subordination were reported by the men who were present but took no part in the murder, but exonerated Colonel Williamson from all blame.

Our volunteers sauntered about the desolated Moravian town to see what they could see, and that was but little, except the extreme lonely aspect of the place, but in doing so one of the men picked up a good garden spade and concluded to carry it with him, saying it would be of service to bake bread on.

We left the Moravian towns on the 30th of May,

and nothing worthy of note occurred until after we arrived on the Sandusky plains, which was on the 4th day of June, where we camped, and on the 5th of June the battle commenced, and was renewed on the 6th of June, 1782.

On these two days the volunteers suffered very much from extreme heat and the want of water, but our company did not suffer for want of water as much as others, for your father, with two canteens, carried water to our company from where a large tree had fallen out of root, and the opening made by the roots filled with rain water, and from this reservoir he supplied our company at the risk of his life, as bullets from the Indian rifles were flying all around us, and sometimes wounding a comrade at the sapling or tree where he stood.

Daniel Canon and two other men of our company, filled with curiosity and the novelty of the situation, climbed up into scrubby bushy-topped trees and shot and killed, or wounded, several Indians secreted among the long grass, for whenever an Indian raised his head a little to see if he could get a shot at one of our men, some one of these sharpshooters would pop away at him from his hiding place in the tree-top.

Colonel Crawford and his men, after battling with the Indians for near two days, and gaining nothing, but losing a great many valuable lives, and fearing that if they occupied their ground until next day it might prove disastrous, as our ammunition and provisions were nearly exhausted.

Seeing that delay would be dangerous if not disas-

trous, a retreat was therefore ordered to take place by six o'clock on the night of the 6th of June, to be conducted with as much secrecy as possible, leaving all the fires burning so as to deceive the Indians, and in making preparations for the retreat, bread had to be baked, and for that purpose some of the men had made use of a spade picked up near the Moravian town on our way out. The spade, while hot, had been thrown to one side, and I happened to set my foot on it, and the bottom being out of my moccasin, my foot was burned severely before I felt the pain. For a while the pain was very severe, but at length it became easy and I fell asleep; but I suppose I could not have slept long, for the last time I saw your father—till I saw him afterward at home with my mother and sisters—he came to me and gave me a shake, at the same time saying, “Jamy, Jamy, up, and let us be off; the men are all going.” I sprang to my feet and stepped to the sapling where my horse was tied, but to my sad disappointment my horse had slipped his bridle.

I groped about in the dark and discovered two other horses tied to the same sapling, and my horse standing at their tails. This revived my drooping spirits. On finding my horse standing quiet, I bridled him and mounted, and about the same time a number of other horses were mounted by their owners, and all put out from the camp ground together, amounting in all to nine in number, and we made as much haste to get away as we could, considering the darkness of the road, and no roads but open woods to ride through, and no one to guide us. At this time the main body of the volun-

teers, under Colonel Williamson, were retreating on what we considered not as nigh a course home, leaving us nine and many other stragglers behind to take care of themselves as best they could, and to steer their own course homeward, and, as it turned out afterward, but few of these stragglers ever got home. They were either shot down and scalped, or, if made prisoners, they were tortured in a cruel manner, and sometimes burned at the stake. Hence, men who knew the Indian custom of treating prisoners of war, would rather suffer themselves to be shot or die by the blow of a tomahawk, than to suffer more deaths than one by torture. This was my determination when I sprang off from my four remaining comrades and was chased by two Indians for life, as I will shortly relate.

I and my eight comrades had not advanced far, perhaps not over a mile, on our retreat, until we all rode into a large deep swamp. In this dismal swamp we all got our horses deeply plunged into the mire, so much so that we were compelled to dismount and take to our feet, leaving our horses to be got out by the Indians the next day or perish in the mire. As soon as we dismounted from our horses in the swamp, we were obliged to make our way as best we could by stepping from one tuft or bunch of grass to another all the way across the swamp. We had one little fearful man with us, that ought to have stayed at home; he was too short in the legs to step at all times so as to reach the next tuft—hence he would slip into the mire and slush up to his armpits, and in this situation he would work and toil to get out, but could not for a

while. He would then raise the hue and cry for help, and beg of us for God's sake not to leave him. His hallooing and bawling was so loud that I was afraid he would bring the Indians upon us; but by some means he got out of the swamp, and soon overtook us, well plastered with mud up to his armpits.

I made but a poor out at walking, owing to the bad burn on the sole of my foot, and the bottom being out of my moccasin. However, my spirit and anxiety to get home bore me up, and I walked on in much pain. We traveled all that night, and the next day till noon, without rest or food. After we had stopped to rest I took from my knapsack the piece of Indian blanket I had found on the camp ground the evening before, and tore off another strap and wrapped it round my foot over the burn, which, by this time became sore and much inflamed. But the piece of blanket proved of great service, for, as it would wear through on the sore, I would shift it round, and when one piece was worn out I would replace it with another, and in this manner preserved my foot, as much as possible, from injury. At this place we concluded to take some refreshment, as we had eaten nothing since the evening before.

The place where we stopped to dine was all overgrown with high weeds, which we broke down and spread a blanket on, then each man took from his little store of provisions a portion of his ash cake, baked on the camp ground the evening before, and laid it on the blanket, which served us instead of a table cloth. We commenced eating, and had ate but a short time, when the little fearful man, who had made such a noise in

the swamp the night before, would be up by turns looking for Indians. At length he squatted down quickly, and in a low tone bade us hide. "There is Indians coming," he said. On hearing this, each man took his course and hid. For my part, I took the direction toward the Indian trail, and concealed myself in a large bunch of alder bushes, where I had a full view of the Indians as they passed. All at once the foremost one on the trail stopped short, and that brought all the Indians behind him to a halt.

They were all mounted on Indian ponies, twenty-five in number, and it appeared as if the Indians had heard a rustling noise made by the men in their haste to hide, for as soon as the Indians brought their horses to a halt, they looked and gazed round about and appeared to be listening, fully intent upon catching any sound or noise that was made. But our men were all soon hidden among the high weeds, and a deathlike stillness followed. In a very short time, hearing no noise, the foremost Indian gave his horse two or three kicks on the side, and a whistle, and the rest following his example, moved off on a trot toward Sandusky, still keeping their order in Indian file. From the place of my concealment I had a full view of the twenty-five Indians who had given us such a scare, and caused us to hide. I could, with my rifle, have brought down any one of them, but I durst not, knowing that it would have brought about my own destruction and that of my comrades, for every one of those Indians was armed with a rifle, and on their way to Upper Sandusky. I and my comrades were glad to be thus rid of their company.

As soon as those Indians had gone out of sight, I and my comrades returned to the spot where the blanket lay, and each man gathered up what belonged to him and stored it away for future use, not having any desire, at the time, to finish our dinner. The scare we had gotten from the presence of so many Indians, had the effect to make us feel satisfied that we had had, for the present, dinner enough, and we all started off on our course home, but could not shake off the fear of meeting Indians.

On the evening of the same day, being the 7th of June, 1782, while we were pursuing our way across a large space of open ground, we saw, at a considerable distance from us, running off to our right, a solitary Indian, but at too great a distance to shoot him. From this single Indian we apprehended no danger, but we afterward paid dearly for our security, as you shall hear. I remember that after my return home, on relating the circumstance of seeing this solitary Indian, it was suggested to me that we should have turned off at a right angle and steered northward for a few miles, and then have turned east again, and by that means evaded the Indians that might follow us. But my reply was, that men who were acquainted with the sagacity of the Indians know that it is hard to evade their pursuit. They track white men, and Indians too, on leaves, grass, or bare ground, and it is said they can distinguish between the white man's track and that of the Indian, when the white man could see no track at all.

But for the timebeing, we marched heedlessly on in

security, keeping on our course until dark. We then lay down to rest and slept soundly and securely, having had no sleep since the night of the 5th, and but little then.

On the morning of the 8th of June we pushed on in high spirits, believing, as we thought, we were leaving the camp ground and the Indians some miles behind.

This day, June 8th, 1782, about ten o'clock in the morning, we passed over a small hill and descended into a valley below, when we were fired upon by a party of Indians concealed in ambush on our right. I was walking so close to the man on my left that I could have laid my hand on his shoulder, he on the left, and I on the right, next to the Indians, and yet my comrade was shot dead the first fire. The ball must have passed very close to me, and I supposed the Indian aimed to kill both of us with the same shot. But he was taken and I was left. Four of our men out of the nine fell at the first fire, and four of the remaining five took shelter behind trees.

The Indians, after their first fire, rose to their feet and called out in broken English to surrender, and not a man of them should be hurt. But I could place no confidence in an Indian, so I therefore broke and ran off at the top of my speed; but after running about twenty rods, I thought of my comrades, and on looking round in that direction, beheld the remaining four men all dead. Two were struck down by the tomahawk, and the two that still remained fought bravely until overpowered by superior numbers. The Indians had it in their power at one time to have shot me

before I had got out of gun-shot, and as I ran in a lame hobbling manner, they may have supposed that I could be easily taken a prisoner by running me down, and then have their sport burning me at the stake. But, thank God, in this they missed their aim. And just as I supposed their aim was to take me alive, so it turned out to be; for just as soon as they had slaughtered my comrades, I saw two of perhaps their swiftest runners start after me at full speed. On seeing this I mended my gait. I now saw and considered my life was at stake for the first time during this campaign, and this thought infused more life, vigor, and energy into my frame, and made me soon forget my burnt foot, and cause me to gain ground as I advanced from my pursuers.

When they discovered I was gaining on them they shot at, but missed me. These shots only made me run the faster, hoping and expecting soon to be out of reach of bullets. It was not long after they fired at me until one of them turned back, and soon after the second and last one left the pursuit and turned back to his comrades, leaving the race all to myself, for which I was thankful, and soon slackened my speed, and continued to take it more moderate all my journey through, until I crossed the Ohio River and reached home.

The evening of the 8th of June, 1782, a day I came near losing my life, and on which I lost by the Indian tomahawk and rifle, eight of my companions, as night began to close in, I thought it prudent to look out a place of concealment, not knowing but some of the

Indians might be on my track all day. At length I found an old hollow log with a large cavity, into which I crept feet foremost, taking my gun in with me. Here in this retreat I rested and slept soundly till morning. This ended my third night out since I left the battle ground. On the morning of the 9th of June I left my place of concealment, much refreshed by sleep and rest, both of which I much needed, and again took my course for home. But at first I could hardly walk a step, my foot being so sore and much swollen and inflamed, from the manner in which the Indians forced me to use it the day before.

And now my provision was gone, and the only sustenance I had until I crossed the Ohio River was one young blackbird I had caught, and service berries at this time ripe and in many places plenty, on my way homeward. I now traveled at an easy rate, but my progress was much retarded owing to my lameness, and having to stop frequently to gather service berries for food; but I progressed slowly on, not forgetting to keep a sharp lookout for Indians, but saw no more of them till long after my return home.

In pursuing my homeward course I suppose I passed near where Mount Vernon, Knox county, now stands, where I struck the waters of Owl Creek, and passed down the same until near its junction with the Mohi-gan Creek.

High up on Owl Creek I struck an Indian trail, and soon discovered fresh signs of Indians having passed on toward Sandusky. This discovery caused me to alter my course, for I had no wish to keep the trail,

fearing I should meet Indians. Striking off from the trail, I took the highest route to Tuscarawas River.

After I left the trail at what I considered a safe distance, I sat down to rest, and not far off I saw a shelving rock, with abundance of dry leaves under it, which I thought would be good place to rest for the night, but was afraid it was too near the Indian trail, and I concluded to travel that night and the next day, that I might be as far out of reach of the Indians as possible.

I rose to my feet and made the attempt to proceed on my way, but after I had walked a few steps I found that I could not travel now after dark, for my head became dizzy, and I reeled and staggered like a drunken man, and I found I could gain no headway, so I gave up traveling that night and made my way to the shelving rock. I was aware that my weakness arose from a want of nourishing food. After I came to the shelving rock, I was afraid to lay down without first stirring up the leaves with my ramrod to find out if snakes stayed among them, but hearing no noise except what I made, I tumbled in, and slept well till morning.

From this place I steered direct for the Tuscarawas River, which, on my arrival, I found too deep to cross. I turned up the stream till I came to a ripple, where I stripped off all my clothes and tied them in a small bundle, which I held in my left hand on the top of my head, while I held my gun in my right hand above the water. I then waded across the river, the water in the deepest place being up to my neck. I soon

dressed and ascended the hill from the river. At the top of the hill I discovered an old Indian trading camp, where, scattered over the ground, lay a great many whisky kegs, and the staves of many more gone to pieces. How or whence so many kegs and a few old whisky barrels had come or had been collected, I could not conjecture, for I felt sure that the Indians had no means of conveying them to that place at that time. White men must have done it; but it appeared evident that the place had been used long since as a rendezvous for Indian drink and frolic.

Here, on this old camp ground, among the kegs and staves, I concluded to stay all night, it being almost sundown. Finding the gnats and musquitoes were likely to be troublesome, I struck up a fire—the first I had enjoyed the benefit of since I left the camp-fires on the plains. The old dry staves served for fuel to keep the fire up. I ran some risks in kindling a fire on a high hill in the Indian country, and on the very ground where they had had many drunken frolics, but I risked it, and no Indian was attracted to the fire to harm me.

This night among the kegs was my fifth night out from camp. Early the next morning (the 11th of June, 1782), after sleeping most of the night, I left the old drinking ground and steered for the Ohio River, and on the morning of the 12th of June I arrived at said river a short distance above the mouth of Wheeling Creek, not far above where the town of Wheeling now stands.

Finding no chance of crossing at that place, I kept

up the river until I got a short distance above the mouth of Rush Run, opposite Pumphrey's bar and bottom. At this place I concluded to cross, and proceeded to construct a raft by tying old rails together with bark peeled from white-walnut bushes. These rails had floated down from the upper country, and lodged against a large sugar-tree which had fallen from the bank into the river. After I had completed my raft I shoved it into the river, and having procured a piece of shivered rail for a paddle, I took my gun in my hand and crawled on my raft on my hands and knees. I then paddled over to the Virginia shore safe. I was never more thankful in my life, resting sure that I was safe from the Indians.

Seeing a number of horses feeding on Pumphrey's bottom, next the river, I was fully bent on riding one of them. I took from my raft some of the bark and formed a halter, and approached the horses and tried to catch three or four of them, but not one would let me lay my hand on it. At length I put the halter on a poor old raw-boned mare, and gun in hand, I mounted and took up the hill on a path that led me to an improvement with a cabin-house, and here, for the first time since I left the Ohio River on my outward trip, I heard the chickens crowing, but there were no inhabitants, and not even a dog to bark. But still keeping on the path, I passed several improvements, at each of which the fowls would crow, but still no dog to bark, nor a human being to be seen.

At length the path led me to a fort in Virginia Short Creek, and at the fort I found the neighbors had col-

lected for safety. Runners had been sent around to warn them that Colonel Crawford and his volunteers had been defeated, and it was expected that the Indians would be in, and would soon be at their old work of murdering, scalping, and plundering the defenseless inhabitants; and here at this fort I found several of my comrades who had escaped from the battle ground at Sandusky Plains, and wandered in like myself, in safety, but had reached the fort before me.

I stayed at the fort till the next day, and there I procured a horse that I rode on to near Washington, Pennsylvania, where I had relatives living, and with them I stayed two nights, and from these relatives I got a passage on horseback to my own home, where, for several days nothing but gloomy expectation had been indulged in by my mother and sisters—they not knowing but I was killed and scalped by the Indians. Your father had arrived four days before me, and could give no satisfactory account of me, as he had not seen me after he awoke me at the camp-fire at retreating time on the night of the 7th of June, and I did not arrive home till the 15th of June, 1782.

And here ends the narrative of Colonel James Paul, whose narrative had never been penned down until I did it in the month of January, 1826.

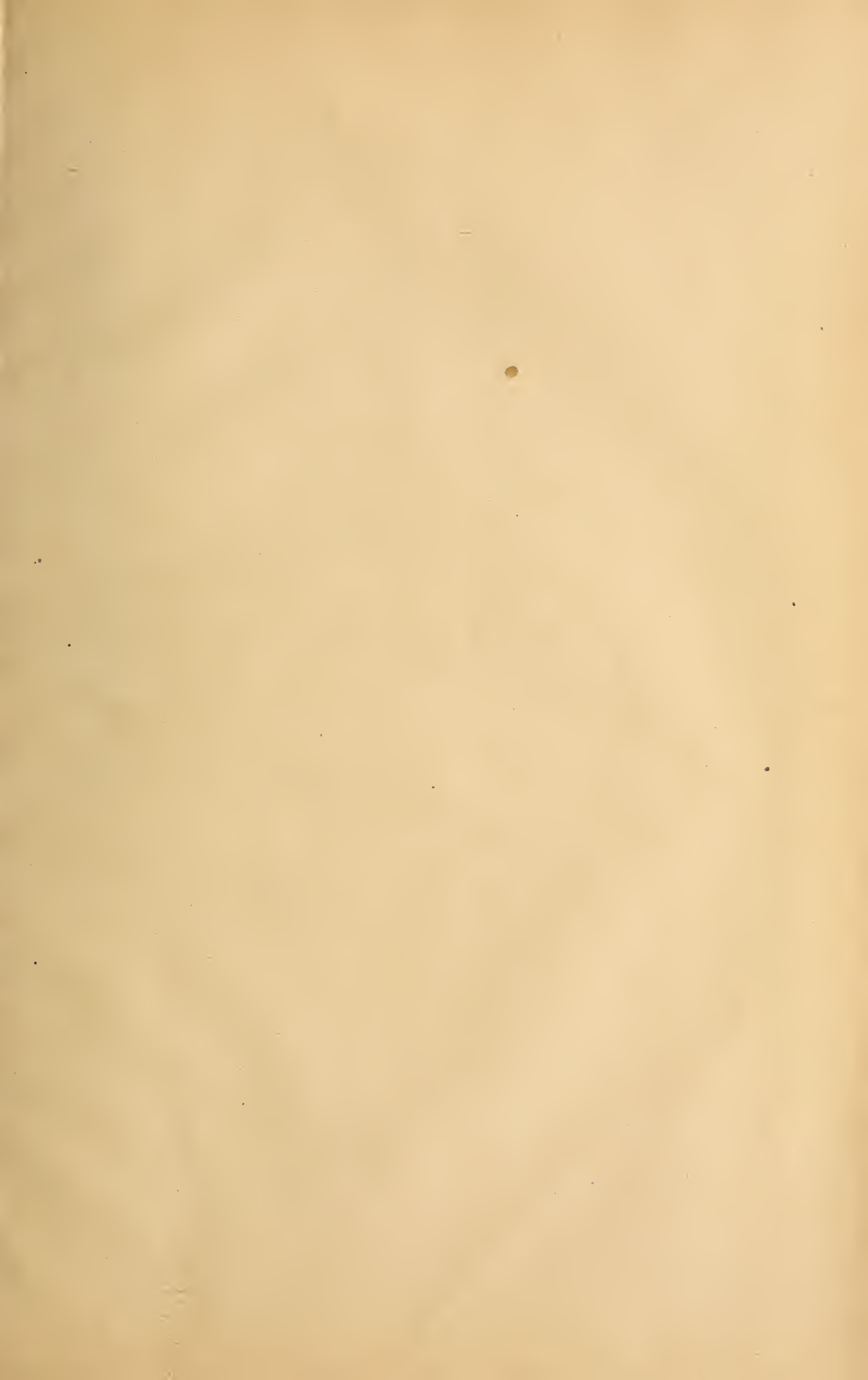
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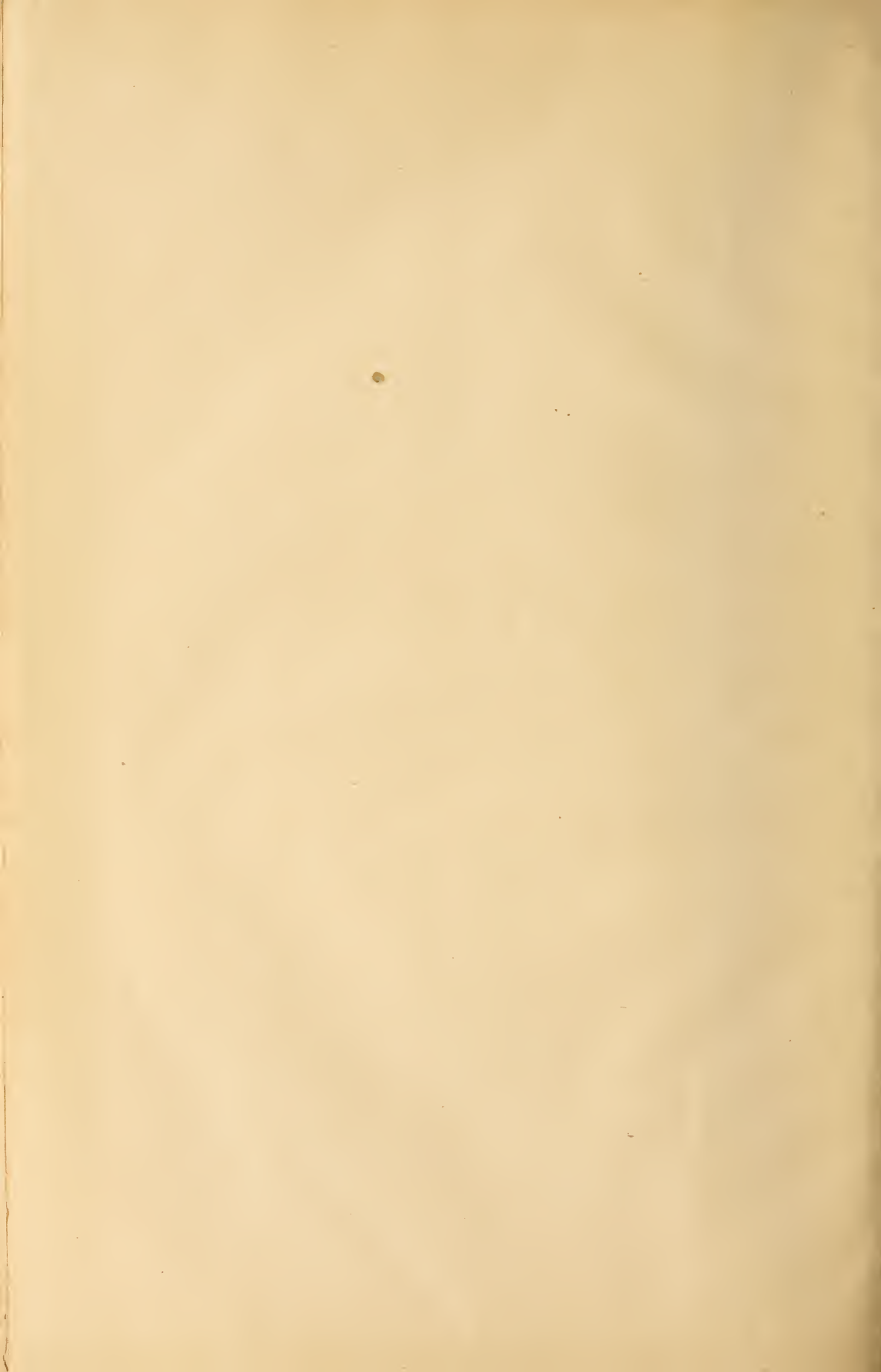
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WONDERFUL ESCAPE

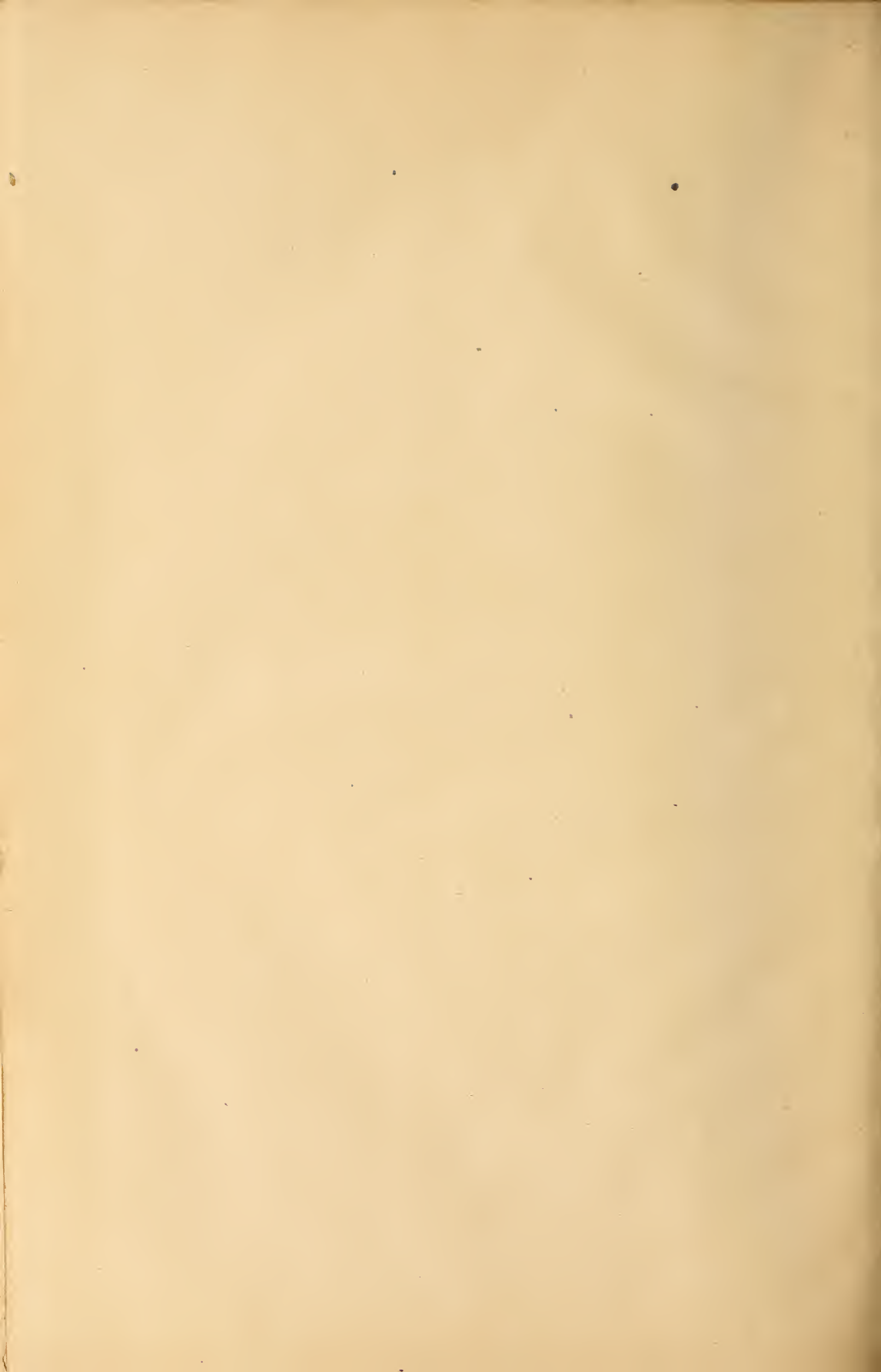
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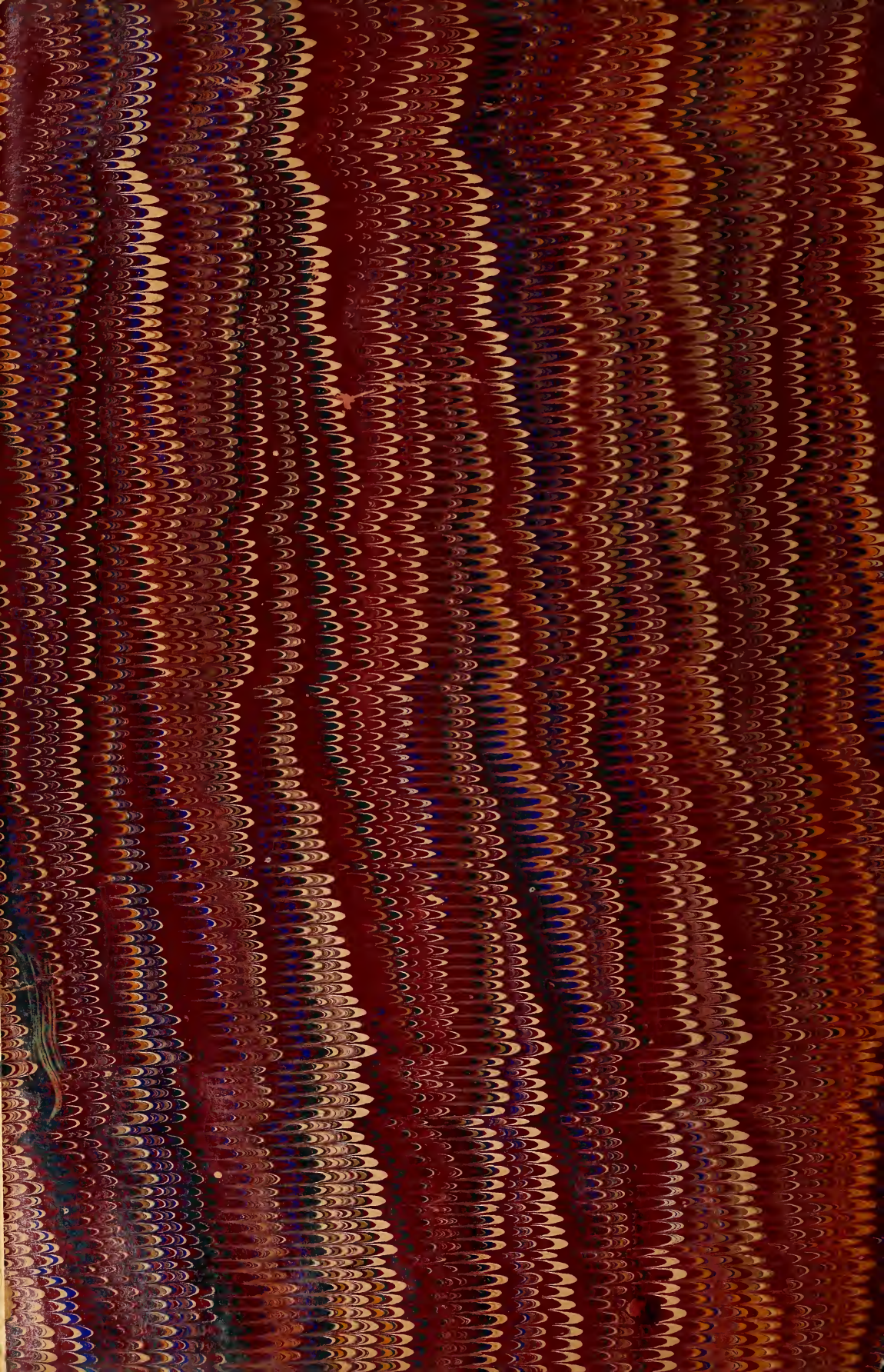
COLONEL JAMES PAUL.

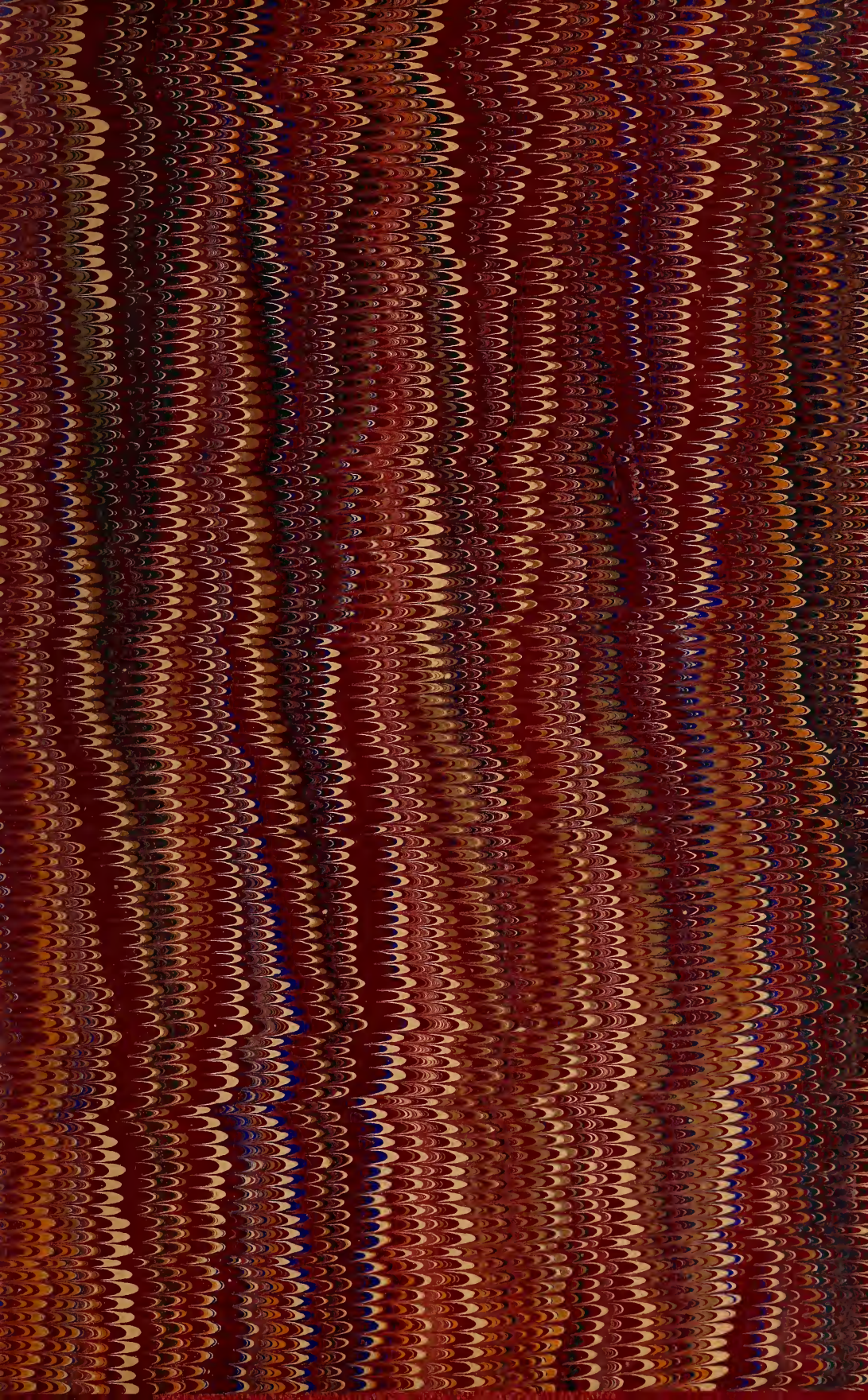












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